

Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 1

Filling out a convention card with a partner is part of the fun of playing duplicate bridge. Whether you prefer a simple approach or a system with lots of bells and whistles, the convention card is a great way to keep you and your partner on the same wavelength.

Many clubs require both members of a partnership to have completed convention cards available as a courtesy to the opponents. Your convention card allows other players to get an overview of your methods at a glance.

The *Conventional Wisdom* series will focus on assisting new players (and even some experienced ones!) with the proper use of the ACBL convention card.

Let's begin with the most important part of the card: the space for you and your partner's names.

NAMES One of the easiest ways to create a pleasant playing environment — and to make new friends — is to introduce yourself and your partner to opponents you haven't met. In the excitement of playing the game, however, we sometimes forget our social obligations. Or sometimes we forget the names of players we've previously met! In either case, the space for players' names on the convention card is one of the easiest ways to allow everyone to associate a name with a face.

GENERAL APPROACH Do you and your partner play Standard American? Two-over-one game forcing? Precision? Maybe you even prefer "Goren", "Schenken" or "Four-card majors" as the best way to describe your methods. Whatever your system, the GENERAL APPROACH space allows your opponents to see the shorthand description of it here.

Tip: To help remember your ACBL player number, write it next to your name on the convention card.

NAMES	
GENERAL APPROACH	
Two Over One: Game Forcing <input type="checkbox"/>	Game Forcing Except When Suit Rebid <input type="checkbox"/>
VERY LIGHT: Openings <input type="checkbox"/>	3rd Hand <input type="checkbox"/> Overcalls <input type="checkbox"/> Preempts <input type="checkbox"/>
FORCING OPENING: 1♣ <input type="checkbox"/> 2♣ <input type="checkbox"/> Natural 2 Bids <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> _____	

VERY LIGHT: Although many players will occasionally open or preempt with a light, shapely hand, the boxes under the VERY LIGHT category

are designed for partnerships who agree to use aggressive, light bidding as a matter of course, not just every now and then. If you and your partner agree to regularly open hands that most players wouldn't, it's legal to do so, but the opponents have a right to know about it too. Check the "Openings" box. If you and your partner think that preempting 3♣ is okay with ♠9 2 ♥10 ♦8 6 2 ♣Q 8 7 6 5 4 3, check the "Preempt" box.

Two Over One: How do you and your partner treat auctions that begin with a two-over-one sequence? For example:

Opener	Responder
1♥	2♣

Is this forcing to game? Forcing for just one round? If the auction begins 1♥-2♣; 2♦-3♣, may opener pass? Some partnerships allow the bidding to stop at 2NT or when responder simply rebids his suit. Others treat two-over-one sequences as 100% game-forcing. Check the box that best describes your approach.

FORCING OPENING: What's your systemic "big bid"? Do you play strong two-bids? Or do you use the popular 2♣? Maybe 1♣ is the strong bid in your system (Precision, for example). Check the appropriate box on this line.

A L E R T

If you use 1♣ as your strong system bid, you must Alert the opponents. (If you or your partner open a strong, artificial 1♣, say "Alert." to warn them about the unusual meaning. If they want to know more about your methods, they'll ask.) Notice that this box is in RED. Items in RED on the convention card require an Alert.

Rule The ACBL General Convention Chart doesn't allow partnerships to agree to open one-level suit bids with fewer than 8 high-card points. The bottom range for a 1NT opening is 10 HCP. Preempts, of course, are weaker by nature, but a preemptive style that is regularly very weak should be indicated on the convention card. Also, if you check any of those boxes, you must tell each of your opponents in advance of play.

Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 2



Notice that “1NT” and the lines for the notrump ranges are in **BLUE**. All items in **BLUE** on the convention card require players to describe the meaning of the bid with a word or short phrase. In the case of notrump opening ranges, simply state the numerical range. For example, if your partner opens 1NT and your agreed-upon range is (say) 13–15 HCP, you should verbally Announce “Thirteen to fifteen,” so that the opponents will know the range too without having to look at your convention card.

Rule The Announcement rule applies even to the common 15–17 1NT range.

5-card Major common Some partnerships like to open 1NT on most balanced hands in the appropriate high-card range even if they contain a five-card major. If you and your partner play this way, check the box.

2♦ and 2♥ Most duplicate players use the 2♦ and 2♥ responses to 1NT as Jacoby transfers, promising five or more cards in the next higher suit, *i.e.*, 2♦ promises five or more hearts and 2♥ promises five or more spades. Opener is expected to accept the transfer by bidding the indicated suit at his next turn. If you use transfer responses to 1NT, check the appropriate **BLUE** boxes.

Both the 2♦ and 2♥ transfers require an Announcement. So if you open 1NT and partner bids 2♥, say “Transfer.” Note that there is also a “Forcing Stayman” option in **RED** under 2♦. Some pairs like to play “two-way” Stayman, meaning that 2♣ is used as Stayman with invitational hands, while 2♦ is used as Stayman with game-forcing hands. Check the **RED** box and Alert if you use this approach instead.



1NT These spaces allow you and your partner to state your point range for an opening 1NT bid. If your 1NT shows 15 to 17 high-card points, write “15” on the top left line and “17” on the top right line. Why are there two sets of lines? It’s because some partnerships have a variable notrump range, which means that the range for their opening 1NT bids may change depending on which seat they open 1NT or on what the vulnerability is. Most pairs, however, use just a single range.

NOTRUMP OPENING BIDS			
1NT	to _____	3♣	_____
_____	to _____	3♦	_____
_____	_____	3♥	_____
5-card Major common <input type="checkbox"/>	_____	3♠	_____
System on over _____	_____	_____	_____
2♣ Stayman <input type="checkbox"/>	Puppet <input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
2♦ Transfer to ♥ <input type="checkbox"/>	_____	4♦, 4♥ Transfer <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Forcing Stayman <input type="checkbox"/>	_____	Smolen <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
2♥ Transfer to ♠ <input type="checkbox"/>	_____	Lbensohl <input type="checkbox"/> (____ denies)	_____
2♠ _____	_____	Neg. Double <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
2NT _____	_____	Other _____	_____

2♣ Most players use a 2♣ response to a 1NT opening as Stayman, asking opener if he has a four-card major. Check the black box if you and your partner play this. A few players prefer a variation called “Puppet Stayman,” which asks opener if he has a four- or five-card major. Check the red box if you use this method, and remember that it requires an Alert, as does anything else in **RED** on the convention card.

2♠ and 2NT While it is possible to treat these responses as natural, it’s popular to assign conventional meanings to these responses. They might be used to show length in one or both minor suits. For example, some pairs like to play that 2♠ shows clubs (similar to a transfer), while 2NT shows diamonds. There are many variations you may agree to play with your partner, and these spaces allow you to briefly describe your methods. Note that the lines are in **RED**; an Alert is required if the meanings are not natural.

System on over interference

Occasionally the opponents will interfere when your side opens 1NT. When this happens, you and your partner may agree to ignore their bidding and play your system as if they had not acted. This approach is called “system on.” For example, many players like their system to be on if the opponents double since the double takes up no bidding room. This means that Stayman and

Jacoby transfers (see below) would still be “on” so that the conventional message of responder’s 2♣, 2♦ and 2♥ bids would be unchanged. Others players, however, think it’s too confusing to play systems on if the opponents interfere, so their bids revert to natural meanings. This approach is called “system off.” If you play system on, use the space provided to say which bids by the opponents (such as double and/or 2♣) allow you to still play Stayman, transfers or other conventional calls.

Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 3



4♦, 4♥ Transfer

Many partnerships use 4♦ and 4♥ as transfers to 4♥ and 4♠, respectively. This popular treatment is known as a Texas transfer. After partner opens 1NT you may show a long major suit (with appropriate values) at the four level by bidding the suit one rank below the one you actually hold. Partner will accept the transfer by bidding your “real” suit.



If you play this method, you must Announce “Transfer” to the opponents when partner responds 4♦ or 4♥ to your 1NT opening. The BLUE box indicates a bid that must be described to the opponents by an Announcement.

3♣, 3♦, 3♥, 3♠ Ask a dozen pairs what meanings they assign to these bids and you’re likely to get a dozen different answers. There are many popular treatments, so it’s important that you discuss with your partner what these bids mean in your partnership. Many pairs play 3♣ and 3♦ as natural, but be certain you understand what strength these bids promise. Some pairs like to play these as weak; they’re a sign-off. Others prefer to treat them as invitational to 3NT promising a decent six-card suit. And others prefer to use them as strong and slam-going. If you play any of these treatments, no Alert is required. If, however, you’d prefer to use any of these bids to show, say, a two-suited hand (many pairs use 3♥ and 3♠ to show both majors) or maybe a three-suited hand (with shortness in the suit bid), that’s okay too, as long as you write a brief explanation on the convention card and Alert the treatment. Note that these lines are in RED, requiring an Alert.

NOTRUMP OPENING BIDS	
1NT to _____	3♣ _____
_____ to _____	3♦ _____
5-card Major, common <input type="checkbox"/>	3♥ _____
System on over _____	3♠ _____
2♣ Stayman <input type="checkbox"/> Puppet _____	_____
2♦ Transfer to ♥ <input type="checkbox"/>	4♦, 4♥ Transfer <input type="checkbox"/>
_____ Forcing Stayman <input type="checkbox"/>	Smolen <input type="checkbox"/>
2♥ transfer to ♠ <input type="checkbox"/>	Lebensohl <input type="checkbox"/> (____ denies)
2♠ _____	Neg. Double <input type="checkbox"/>
2NT _____	Other: _____

Negative Double Say partner opens 1NT, right-hand opponent bids 2♥ and you double. Many pairs play this as a good old-fashioned penalty double, but some like to play it as a negative double, promising values and length in the other suits, especially the major(s). If you prefer the latter approach, check the box.

Smolen Experienced pairs use Smolen to help them describe a hand with a 5-4 or 4-5 pattern in the majors after partner’s 1NT opening. Smolen also helps keep the strong hand as declarer if a fit is found. Say the auction begins

Partner	You
1NT	2♣
2♦	?

After your 2♣ Stayman inquiry, partner has denied holding a four-card major. If you hold game-forcing values with five spades and four hearts, you know your side doesn’t have an eight-card heart fit, but you might still have a 5-3 spade fit. How to show this kind of hand? Playing Smolen, you may now jump to the three level in your shorter major (hearts) to tell partner about your pattern. Partner can then decide between 3NT and 4♠. If you have four spades and five hearts, you would jump to 3♠ instead. Smolen requires an Alert after the three-level jump.

Experienced
Players

Lebensohl When the opponents intervene over your side’s 1NT opening, it can be difficult to describe your hands accurately. For example, what does 3♣ mean in this auction?

You	Opponent	Partner	Opponent
1NT	2♥	3♣	

2♥ is natural. Is 3♣ forcing? Or is it to play? Both ways are reasonable, but you must have an agreement. To help differentiate between forcing and non-forcing actions by responder, many pairs use lebensohl. It works like this: Direct three-level actions (as in the given auction) are forcing, but with weak hands, responder bids 2NT (Alertable) first. This conventional bid commands opener to bid 3♣ so that responder can pass (with clubs) or bid another suit (such as diamonds) to show a weak hand with a long suit. Another nice part of lebensohl is that it allows you to tell partner whether you have a stopper in the enemy suit. Many lebensohl enthusiasts use this type of sequence to deny a stopper:

You	Opponent	Partner	Opponent
1NT	2♥	3NT	

Partner’s 3NT call says, “I have enough strength to be in game, but I don’t have a stopper.” To show a stopper, partner bids 2NT first, forcing you to bid 3♣, and then bids 3NT:

You	Opponent	Partner	Opponent
1NT	2♥	2NT	Pass
3♣	Pass	3NT	

Since the “faster” auction denies a stopper, many pairs write the word “Fast” in the blank next to “denies” on the card. This treatment requires an Alert.

Experienced
Players

Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 4



Puppet Stayman Many pairs use a 3♣ response to a 2NT opening as Stayman, asking if opener has a four-card major. A popular variation is to play puppet Stayman, wherein the 3♣ response asks if opener has a four- or five-card major. The advantage to this method is that it allows opener to open 2NT even if the hand contains a five-card major without worrying about missing a possible 5–3 major-suit trump fit.

Experienced
Players

ALERT

If you play puppet Stayman, check the **RED** box and Alert the opponents.

2NT Most pairs use a 2NT opening to describe a strong balanced hand. Popular high-card point ranges include 20–21, 20–22 or even 22–24. Write your ranges in the lines provided. Note that these lines are in black, so no Announcement is necessary.

3♠ Since most pairs use Stayman and transfers, the 3♠ response to 2NT is often left without a meaning. Indeed many pairs agree simply not to assign a meaning to 3♠ at all! Others, however, use a 3♠ response to show some sort of hand with length in one or both minors.

ALERT

If your 3♠ response is not natural, write a brief description on the **RED** lines provided and Alert the opponents.

NT OPENING BIDS

3♣ _____
3♦ _____
3♥ _____
3♠ _____
4♦, 4♥ Transfer
Smolen
Lebensohl (_____ denies)
Neg. Double : _____
Other: _____

2NT _____ to _____
Puppet Stayman
Transfer Responses:
Jacoby Texas
3♠ _____
3NT _____ to _____

Conventional NT Openings

Conventional NT Openings These lines are used to describe methods that are rare or unusual. An Alert is required for any treatment described in this space. Pairs who use a 2NT opening to show a weak two-suited hand, typically the minors, should describe this treatment here. Some pairs like to use 3NT to show a long, running minor suit, possibly with other values in different suits. This approach is popularly called “Gambling Notrump,” since opener is gambling he can take nine tricks in 3NT before the opponents can defeat him.

ALERT

If you play this method, write a short description on the **RED** line provided and Alert the opponents.

Transfer Responses: After a 2NT opening showing a strong balanced hand, many pairs allow responder to show a long major with a transfer response. Responder bids the suit below the one he actually holds, and opener accepts the transfer by bidding the next higher suit.

Jacoby After a 2NT opening, Jacoby transfers are made at the three level.

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♦
3♥	

Responder's 3♦ bid promises five or more hearts, and asks opener to accept the Jacoby transfer by bidding the next highest suit, 3♥. The auction proceeds from there. Similarly, a 3♥ response to 2NT would be a Jacoby transfer to 3♠.

Texas After a 2NT opening, Texas transfers are made at the four level.

Opener	Responder
2NT	4♦
4♥	

When responder uses a Texas transfer, he promises at least six cards in the major. To transfer to spades, responder would bid 4♥, asking opener to accept the Texas transfer by bidding 4♠. After the transfer is accepted, responder may pass or continue bidding depending on the strength of his hand.



Note that the transfer boxes are in **BLUE**. If you play Jacoby or Texas transfers, check the **BLUE** box(es) and Announce “Transfer” if your partner uses a transfer response to your 2NT opening.

ALERT

If you play any conventional responses to a 3NT opening (such as transfers) use the **RED** line for a brief description, and Alert the opponents.

Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 5



MAJOR OPENING	
Expected Min. Length	4 5
1st/2nd	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3rd/4th	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
RESPONSES	
Double Raise: Force <input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>	
After Overcall: Force <input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>	
Conv. Raise: 2NT <input type="checkbox"/> 3NT <input type="checkbox"/> Splinter <input type="checkbox"/>	
Other: _____	
1NT: Forcing <input type="checkbox"/> Semi-forcing <input type="checkbox"/>	
2NT: Forcing <input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> _____ to _____	
3NT: _____ to _____	
Drury <input type="checkbox"/> : Reverse <input type="checkbox"/> 2-Way <input type="checkbox"/> Fit <input type="checkbox"/>	
Other: _____	

MAJOR OPENING

Expected Min. Length: Check the appropriate box(es) to indicate the minimum number of cards your partnership promises when you open 1♥ or 1♠. Although most North American players prefer using five-card majors, some will vary this approach in third or fourth seat where only four cards are promised.

If you always promise a five-card suit regardless of which position you're in, check the boxes in the "5" column. If you are a four-card major enthusiast instead, check the boxes in the "4" column. And if you promise five cards in the major in first or second seat, but only four after a third- or fourth-seat opening, check the box under the "5" column for the row labeled "1st/2nd" and check the box in the "4" column for the row labeled "3rd/4th."

RESPONSES

After Overcall: You and your partner might decide the double-raise sequences have the same meaning even if the opponents interfere. Or you might decide to change your agreements after an overcall. For example, after

You	Opp.	Partner	Opp.
1♥	2♣	3♥	Pass
?			

what does partner's 3♥ mean? Is it the same as when the opponents were silent? Or is it different? Check the appropriate box to match your agreements.

Note that the preemptive jump is not Alertable when the opponents interfere.

Conv. Raise: Many pairs use conventional forcing raises after a major-suit opening. Common treatments are listed here. If you play any of the following methods, check the appropriate RED boxes on this line and Alert the opponents.

2NT: Many pairs use the auction

You	Partner
1♥ or 1♠	2NT

to show a game-forcing raise in the major with four-card or longer trump support. The convention called Jacoby 2NT is the most common example.

3NT: After you open one of a major, say partner jumps to 3NT. Without an agreement, the default position is that 3NT is natural, showing a balanced hand with game-going values. Some partnerships prefer, however, to use 3NT to show a specific hand type. A common treatment is that 3NT shows a 4-3-3-3 pattern with opening values. Opener may pass or correct to four of the major or even search for slam. There are other possible variations, as well.

Splinter: Another popular treatment is that a double jump into a new suit shows a game-going or better hand with four-card or longer support for opener's suit and shortness in the suit bid. This treatment is called a splinter. For example:

You	Partner
1♠	4♣

Playing splinters, partner's 4♣ would show club shortness, good spade support and a good hand.

Other: Any other conventional major-suit raises may be listed here. The popular Bergen raises, for example, would be listed on this line. Note that any treatment listed here must be Alerted.

RESPONSES

Double Raise

How does your partnership treat these sequences:

You	Opp.	Partner	Opp.
1♥	Pass	3♥	Pass
?			

or

You	Opp.	Partner	Opp.
1♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
?			

Are they forcing to game? Invitational? Preemptive (weak)? Whatever your agreements, check the appropriate box.

If you play a double raise as preemptive (weak) in a non-competitive auction, you should check the RED box and Alert the opponents.

ALERT

ALERT

ALERT

Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 6



1NT: Forcing In standard bidding, a 1NT response to a 1♥ or 1♠ opening is non-forcing, showing a limited hand, meaning it has less than invitational strength.

Many pairs, however (especially those who play the popular system called Two-over-One Game Force), define their 1NT response as forcing for one round, hence the name “1NT forcing.” Opener must bid again, even if it means bidding a three-card suit at the two level, to allow responder an opportunity to finish describing her hand.

For example, opener holds

♠A 9 5 4 3 ♥7 4 3 ♦A Q 7 ♣K 6.

After opening 1♠ (the opponents are silent), responder bids 1NT (forcing). If a convenient rebid is available, opener would choose it. Here, however, she rebids 2♦. Since the 1NT response is frequently played as denying game-forcing values (note that there are many ways to play this, however), responder can now make a non-forcing correction to her suit, such as 2♥ or 3♣, with the appropriate hand. Alternatively, responder may pass (with a diamond fit) or take a preference to 2♠ which typically shows a doubleton. There are other possibilities as well, but this outlines the general structure.

Semi-forcing Other pairs, even Two-over-One fans, allow opener to pass 1NT with a balanced minimum, such as the example hand above. This approach is referred to as “1NT semi-forcing.” If you play 1NT Forcing or Semi-forcing, check the appropriate box.



If you play either of these methods, you must Announce “forcing” or “semi-forcing” when your partner responds 1NT to your major-suit opening. **BLUE** items on the convention card require an Announcement.

Note that you should discuss with your partner whether these treatments are in effect after interference or by a passed hand.

MAJOR OPENING			
Expected Min. Length	4	5	
1st/2nd	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3rd/4th	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
RESPONSES			
Double Raise: Force	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inv.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Weak	<input type="checkbox"/>		
After Overcall: Force	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inv.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Weak	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Conv. Raise: 2NT	<input type="checkbox"/>	3NT	<input type="checkbox"/>
Splinter	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other:	_____		
1NT: Forcing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Semi-forcing	<input type="checkbox"/>
2NT: Forcing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inv.	<input type="checkbox"/>
		_____ to _____	
3NT:	_____ to _____		
Drury	<input type="checkbox"/>	: Reverse	<input type="checkbox"/>
2-Way	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fit	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	_____		

2NT: Forcing If you play that a 2NT response to 1♥ or 1♠ shows a balanced hand with game-forcing strength, check the box.

Invitational If a 2NT response to a one-of-a-major opening shows a balanced invitational hand, check the box and indicate the high-card point range (11 to 12 is usual) for this bid. Neither of these treatments is Alertable.

3NT If you play that a 3NT response to 1♥ or 1♠ shows a balanced hand with a defined point range, check the box and write the point range in the blanks provided.

Drury Many pairs believe that it's advantageous to be allowed to open light in third (or even fourth) seat. To prevent their passed-hand partner (responder) from getting overboard with an invitational hand, the Drury convention allows responder to inquire whether the opening hand is light or full strength. Drury works like this: after a 1♥ or 1♠ opening in third seat, a 2♣ response asks opener to clarify how good (or bad) her hand is. Rebidding the major shows a full-strength opener, while a 2♦ rebid shows a sub-minimum hand. The 2♦ rebid warns responder to “take it easy.”

Reverse Reverse Drury is considered to be an improvement over the original Drury convention. For example, after this auction

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♣	Pass	?	

East may show a poor opening hand by rebidding his major (2♥). With full values, East could instead bid 2♦ to show a full opener. Since the meanings of these responses are the opposite of Drury, this treatment is called “reverse Drury.” Experienced players usually prefer the reverse variation.

2-Way As a further refinement to the Drury idea, some pairs allow responder to differentiate between three- and four-card support. The 2♣ response shows three-card support for opener's major, while 2♦ shows four. Since the 2♦ response is needed for the four-card raise, this method requires that the partnership play reverse Drury.

Examples:

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣ ⁽¹⁾			

(1) I have an invitational hand with three-card spade support.

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦ ⁽¹⁾			

(1) I have an invitational hand with four-card spade support.

Fit If your version of Drury guarantees a fit (at least three cards) for opener's major, check the box. Some players employ a variation which does not promise a fit. The pairs would leave this box blank.

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Note that all of these Drury variations are in **RED**, requiring you to Alert when your partnership employs these methods.

Other Other specialized agreements to a one-of-a-major opening may be listed here. These treatments require an Alert.

Experienced
Players

Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 7



MINOR OPENING

1♣, 1♦: Expected Minimum Length

When you or your partner opens 1♣ or 1♦, how many cards do you promise in each suit? More precisely, what's the least number of cards you promise in each suit?

The answers to these questions depend to a large extent on your system. Standard American practitioners and Precision fans will, of course, have very different answers. But even among Standard bidders, the answer can still vary greatly depending on your partnership style.

It's a simple matter to check the appropriate box on the convention card. Note that it's common for "standard" bidders who use five-card majors (this includes those who would typically describe their methods as Standard American as well as two-over-one players), to check the "3" box for both clubs and diamonds.

Some partnerships, however, like to promise four or more diamonds with their 1♦ opening. This means that with a minimum opening hand that has 4=4=3=2 pattern, such as ♠A J 5 4 ♥K Q 7 3 ♦K 9 6 ♣10 5, they agree to open 1♣ even with a two-card suit. Pairs who employ this method must check the **BLUE** box in the "NF 0-2" column and make an Announcement with their 1♣ opening such as "Could be short." ("NF" means non-forcing; responder may pass with a weak hand and long clubs.)



BLUE items on the convention card require an Announcement.

Partnerships who play a big-club system, such as Precision, must check the **RED** box in the "Conv." column since their 1♣ opening is conventional: it doesn't say anything about club length (indeed, opener could be void) and it is forcing (responder may not pass). This must be Alerted.

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RED items on the convention card require you to Alert when your partnership employs these methods.

MINOR OPENING				
Expected Min. Length	4	3	NF 0-2	Conv.
1♣	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1♦	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RESPONSES				
Double Raise: Force <input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>				
After Overcall: Force <input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>				
Forcing Raise: J/S in other minor <input type="checkbox"/>				
Single raise <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____				
Frequently bypass 4+♦ <input type="checkbox"/>				
1NT/1♣ _____ to _____				
2NT Forcing <input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> _____ to _____				
3NT: _____ to _____				
Other _____				

RESPONSES

Double Raise: Force, Invitational, Weak

What does this auction mean in your partnership?

Opener	Responder
1♦	3♦

If strong and game forcing, check the "Force" box. If invitational instead, check the corresponding box. If it's preemptive, check the "Weak" box. Note that this last treatment must be Alerted.

After Overcall

Let's change the auction given above to this:

You	Opp.	Partner
1♦	1♠	3♦

When the opponents interfere, your partnership may assign a different meaning to the double raise. Check the appropriate box to match the meaning that you and your partner agree to play.

Note that the weak interpretation does not require an Alert when the opponents intervene.

Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 8



J/S in other minor

One way that you and your partner could decide to show an invitational or better hand after a 1♣ or 1♦ opening is to use a jump shift (J/S) in the other minor. These auctions (1♣–2♦ or 1♦–3♣) are rarely used in a natural sense anyway, so you can use them to show hands with a fit for partner's minor, no four-card major and invitational or better strength.

Single raise

Other partnerships like to use the single raise, 1♣–2♣ or 1♦–2♦, to show an invitational or better hand, no four-card major and a fit for partner's minor. This treatment is frequently referred to as "inverted minors." Like the jump shift in the other minor, these bids are forcing for at least one round and (depending on your agreements) possibly forcing to game. If, for example, you agree that a single raise of a minor is invitational or better, you could raise 1♣ to 2♣ with ♠A 7 ♥8 6 4 ♦K J 3 ♣K 10 8 7 2. This 11-count is good enough to invite, but not force to game. After your 2♣ raise, your next bid will clarify your strength.

**A
L
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R
T**

Note that if you decide to play either of the above methods, you should discuss what continuations mean. You must also Alert the opponents.

MINOR OPENING — Responses

Forcing Raise: It's surprising how many pairs don't use some sort of conventional forcing raise after a 1♣ or 1♦ opening. The ability to show an invitational or better hand in response to a minor-suit opening, however, is important. For example, after a 1♣ opening by partner, what would you bid holding:

♠9 7 ♥A K ♦Q 8 6 2 ♣A J 7 3 2?

True, you could shoot out 3NT, but you'd feel silly if the opponents ran off the first umpteen spade tricks. 1♦ is another possibility, but it doesn't seem quite right, does it? If 3♣ is forcing in your partnership you could use that, but many pairs prefer the double jump to show a weak hand since preemptive raises occur with greater frequency than the strong variety.

Therefore, conventional approaches have been invented to handle this type of problem. The most common of these is a jump shift in the other minor (e.g., 1♣–2♦ or 1♦–3♣) and a single raise (e.g., 1♣–2♣ or 1♦–2♦).

MINOR OPENING			
Expected	Min.	Length	
1♣		4	3 0-2 Conv. NF
1♦			<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
RESPONSES			
Double Raise: Force <input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>			
After Overcall: Force <input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>			
Forcing Raise: J/S in other minor <input type="checkbox"/>			
Single raise <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____			
Frequently bypass 4+♦ <input type="checkbox"/>			
1NT/1♣ _____ to _____			
2NT Forcing <input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> _____ to _____			
3NT: _____ to _____			
Other _____			

Frequently bypass four or more diamonds

It's a bridge fact that major suits outscore minor suits, so many pairs, in response to a 1♣ opening, will respond by bidding a four-card major suit instead of a four-card (or longer) diamond suit. For example, if partner opens 1♣, what do you respond holding ♠Q 9 8 4 ♥10 2 ♦A 6 5 4 3 ♣Q 7? If your style is to ignore the diamonds and bid 1♠ instead, that's fine. This is a popular approach, but if you play this way, check the box so that the opponents know about your style, too. This is not, however, an Alertable treatment. If you prefer to respond 1♦ instead, leave the box blank.

1NT/1♣: How many points are you promising when you respond 1NT to a 1♣ opening? Write your range in the spaces provided.

2NT: After a 1♣ or 1♦ opening, what does 2NT show? It typically denies a four-card major, but the range may vary. If it's game forcing, check the appropriate box. If it's invitational instead, check the other box and write in the point-count range in the spaces provided.

3NT: Write in the appropriate range.

**A
L
E
R
T**

Other: Any other conventional treatments should be listed here and Alerted if used.

Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 9



2♦, 2♥, 2♠ For each of these opening two-bids, write the high-card range in the spaces provided. Be sure to check the appropriate box to indicate the type of hand these bids describe. For example, if you play 2♥ as a weak two-bid, check the “Weak” box. If you like strong two-bids, check the “Strong” box. If you play 2♦ as Flannery, however, showing the majors, check the “Conv.” (conventional) box.

2♣ Many players — especially those who employ “standard” or two-over-one systems — use 2♣ to show any hand that is very strong: everything from big, balanced hands to powerful one-, two- or three-suiters. If you play it this way, check the “Strong” box. In the spaces provided to indicate the high-card strength of the bid, many players simply indicate the minimum number of points needed to open 2♣. For example, it’s common to see players write “22 +” in the high-card range spaces.

ALERT If you assign these two-bids any meaning other than natural and weak, you must Alert the opponents. The Alert is required even for strong two-bids.

DESCRIBE Anything of relevance regarding your style for these opening bids goes here. For example, if you frequently open a weak two-bid with a five-card suit, make a note of it here.

RESPONSES/REBIDS There are many ways to respond to an opening two-bid. Briefly describe what the responses mean in this space.

NOTE: Regardless of its meaning, a 2NT response to an opening bid of 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠ does not require an Alert. Many of opener’s rebids following a 2NT response, however, are Alertable.



Consider these auctions:

You Partner
2♦ 3♣

or

2♥ 2♠

In both cases, you have opened with a weak two-bid. Partner, who is not a passed hand, responds in a new suit. Most play that a new suit is forcing, but if you and your partner agree that opener may pass, you must Alert the opponents and check the **RED** New Suit NF (non-forcing) box.

	DESCRIBE	RESPONSES/REBIDS
2♣ _____ to _____ HCP Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> 2♦ Resp: Neg <input type="checkbox"/> Waiting <input type="checkbox"/>		
2♦ _____ to _____ HCP Natural: Weak <input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate <input type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Conv. <input type="checkbox"/>		2NT Force <input type="checkbox"/> New Suit NF <input type="checkbox"/>
2♥ _____ to _____ HCP Natural: Weak <input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate <input type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Conv. <input type="checkbox"/>		2NT Force <input type="checkbox"/> New Suit NF <input type="checkbox"/>
2♠ _____ to _____ HCP Natural: Weak <input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate <input type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Conv. <input type="checkbox"/>		2NT Force <input type="checkbox"/> New Suit NF <input type="checkbox"/>

RULE

While it is popular to define 2♣ openers in terms of trick-taking ability, ACBL regulations and the General Convention Chart do not permit players to use a 2♣ opening with hands that contain a long, strong suit, but that have little outside strength.

ALERT

Players who use a big-club system such as Precision typically define 2♣ as a limited opening hand with a long club suit. If this is your approach, check the **RED** “Other” box, and Alert the opponents. If 2♣ shows, for example, 11 to 15 HCP, write the range in the spaces provided.

2♦ Resp: When your partner opens 2♣ (strong), what does 2♦ mean? Does it show a bad hand? If so, check the Neg (negative) box. If 2♦, however, is simply a waiting bid to allow opener to describe his hand, check the Waiting box. Neither treatment is Alertable.

DESCRIBE Anything else of relevance regarding your 2♣ openings goes in this space.

RESPONSES/REBIDS Use this space to briefly outline other responses to 2♣. If, for example, your responses show number of high-card points or controls, write it here.

Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 10



OTHER CONVENTIONAL CALLS

This section of the convention card serves as a catchall for treatments that don't have a home anywhere else on the card. While several common conventional gadgets are specifically mentioned here, there are several lines provided at the end for partnerships to write in other treatments that they employ.

**A
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T**

Most of the treatments in this section are Alertable. Items in **RED** on the convention card must be Alerted and explained to the opponents upon request.

OTHER CONV. CALLS: New Minor Forcing: 2-Way NMF:
 Weak Jump Shifts: In Comp. Not in Comp.
 4th Suit Forcing: 1 Rd. Game

Weak Jump Shifts

In a competitive auction such as

West	North	East	South
1♣	1♥	2♠	

it's popular to play the 2♠ jump shift as weak. This approach is not Alertable in competition. If, however, you play weak jump shifts even when the opponents are silent, e.g.,

Partner	You
1♣	2♠

check the **RED** "Not in Comp." box and Alert the opponents.

Others

Common treatments you might describe in the lines at the bottom include defenses to artificial and strong 1♣ or 2♣ openings, defenses to the opponents' "unusual" bids such as 2NT showing the minors or Michaels cuebids, or perhaps special constructive agreements such as fit-showing jumps.

4th Suit Forcing

A common bidding tactic by responder to force opener to keep bidding is the convention known as 4th Suit Forcing (4SF). For example, after an auction that begins

Partner	You
1♦	1♠
2♣	?

you could bid 2♥ (the fourth suit) to force opener to make another call. 2♥ in this case would not necessarily promise a true heart holding. It is simply a way to extract more information out of opener. On this auction, responder might have a hand such as

♠A K 7 6 2 ♥9 8 6 ♦K Q ♣J 9. Opener may have three-card spade support or, failing that, a stopper in hearts for 3NT. 4SF allows responder to find out.

The only choice your partnership needs to make is whether this treatment is forcing for one round only (check the "1 Rd." box) or forcing to game (check the "Game" box).

New Minor Forcing

After the auction

Partner	You
1♣	1♠
1NT	?

Experienced

 Players

what would you bid holding
 ♠K Q 7 6 4 ♥A J 9 6 ♦A 8 ♣5 2?

There are sufficient values for game, but which one? 3NT, 4♥ and 4♠ are all possibilities, but you need to know more about partner's shape to make an intelligent decision. To help with situations such as this, many pairs use the treatment called **New Minor Forcing (NMF)**. After any auction that begins

Opener	Responder
1 of a minor	1 of a major
1NT	

responder bids two of the *other* minor to ask opener to clarify his major-suit holdings. In the example auction, therefore, you would bid 2♦. This bid is conventional. Partner can then show three-card spade support (2♠), four hearts (2♥) or neither (2NT), allowing you to make a good guess as to what the final contract should be. If partner had opened 1♦ instead, your NMF bid would be 2♣.

2-Way NMF A refinement to regular NMF is the treatment called 2-Way NMF. After the "platform" of

Opener	Responder
1 of a minor	1 of a major
1NT	

responder announces an invitational hand by rebidding 2♣, while a 2♦ rebid is a game force. These rebids are used regardless of what minor opener bid first. After the 2♣ rebid, opener is usually required to bid 2♦. Rarely, responder will pass this with a weak hand that has a four-card major and six-plus diamonds, but typically responder completes the description of his invitational hand. After responder's game-forcing 2♦ rebid, however, opener makes the first move in describing his major-suit holdings.

Conventional Wisdom



Filling out the convention card — part 11

Anyone who has played tournament bridge for even a short period of time knows that many low-level doubles are commonly played as something other than penalty. Why? It's because the opportunities to really nail the opponents with a penalty double at a low level are rare. Therefore, more practical uses for the double have been developed.

After Overall

If partner opens (say) 1♥, and right-hand opponent overcalls 2♣, what does a double by you mean? If this is a penalty double, check the RED box and Alert the opponents. The Alert is required because this is an unusual treatment in duplicate bridge.

Most pairs play that the double in this situation shows length in the unbid suits, a treatment commonly referred to as a negative double. Negative doubles are popular for a good reason: the opportunities to use them are frequent. Check the Negative box if you play this way, and indicate in the space next to it (labeled "thru") the highest level you play negative doubles.

Responsive

The negative double concept can be applied to many other situations. Another common one is this: LHO opens the bidding, partner doubles and RHO raises his partner's suit, e.g., (1♦)—Dbl—(2♦). What would a double mean? Many pairs have agreed to play this a showing a hand with values, but without clear direction. This type of double is called a responsive double. In the example auction, for example, what would you do with a hand such as ♠Q 9 2 ♥K 4 3 ♦10 5 ♣A 7 6 4 2? The responsive double is useful in this case.

Another situation for the responsive double would be this: LHO opens, partner overcalls and RHO raises opener's suit, e.g., (1♦)—1♠—(2♦). Some play that a double here would be responsive showing the other major (hearts) and some values.

As with negative doubles, indicate how high you play responsive doubles on the "thru" line.

SPECIAL DOUBLES

After Overall: Penalty _____

Negative thru _____

Responsive thru _____ Maximal _____

Support: Dbl. thru _____ Redbl _____

Card-showing Min. Offshape T/O _____

Maximal

Say you open 1♠ and partner raises to 2♠. With a hand that has game interest, you could make a game try by bidding a suit at the three level to ask partner for her input. Depending on whether the game try shows length or shortness, she could look at her holding in that suit to gauge game prospects. For example, you could bid 3♥ next to ask partner if she has a useful holding in hearts.

If the opponents interfere, however, you may not have space to make a game try. Say the auction is this:

You	LHO	Partner	RHO
1♠	2♥	2♠	3♥

If you wanted to make a game try here, you're out of luck — there's no room. That's why some pairs define a double here to show a hand with game interest. This type of double is called a maximal double. Check the box if you play this.



Conventional Wisdom



Filling out the convention card — part 12

As we continue to discuss the section of the convention card devoted to doubles, we recall that many low-level doubles are commonly played as something other than penalty. This is because the opportunities to inflict a large penalty on the opponents at a low level are rare. Therefore, more practical uses for the double have been developed.

Support

In competitive auctions, support doubles and redoubles are used to tell responder that you (as a 1♣ or 1♦ opener) have three-card support for responder's major. For example:

You	LHO	Partner	RHO
1♣	Pass	1♠	2♥
?			



In this auction, you could show three-card spade support by doubling with a hand such as: ♠K 8 5 ♥A 7 ♦J 5 2 ♣K Q 9 8 6

Why do this? It allows you to differentiate between three-card support (double) and four-card support (2♠). This can be valuable information for partner in deciding how high to compete, whether to bid a game or even what denomination to bid.

Change your hand slightly to

♠K 8 6 5 ♥A 7 ♦J 5 2 ♣K Q 9 8,

and you would rebid 2♠ to indicate four-card spade support.

Indicate how high the support double agreement is in effect on the "thru" line (2♥ is popular).

SPECIAL DOUBLES

After Overall: Penalty _____

Negative thru _____

Responsive thru _____ Maximal

Support: Dbl. thru _____ Redbl

Card-showing Min. Offshape T/O

Redouble

The support redouble occurs on this type of auction:

You	LHO	Partner	RHO
1♣	Pass	1♠	Dbl
?			

Playing this method, a redouble would show three spades while a raise (2♠) would promise four. If you play this method, check the appropriate boxes, decide how high the agreement applies and be sure to Alert the opponents.

Items in **RED** on the convention card must be Alerted and explained to the opponents upon request.

ALERT

Minimum Offshape Takeout

A takeout double of an opening bid usually shows a hand with opening values and shortness in the opener's suit. It also suggests support for the unbid suits. Some players, however, will make a takeout double on any hand with minimal opening values (the 12 to 14 HCP range) even if the pattern isn't classic. If, after RHO's 1♥ opening, you would double with a hand such as

♠A 5 ♥K 8 7 3 ♦K J 6 4 ♣Q 8 5,
check the box.

Card-showing

If your low-level competitive doubles show values without being strictly penalty or negative in nature, check this box. For example, if partner opens 1♣, RHO bids 1♥ and you double simply to show a good hand regardless of the pattern, this would be a card-showing double.



Tip: Experienced players consider this type of double to be poor. Partner will have a difficult time trying to figure out your pattern if you double with a hand such as this.

Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 13

Say your right-hand opponent opens the bidding at the one level and you make a one-level overcall in a suit (for example, 1♣ by RHO, 1♥ by you); what kind of hand do you promise for this action? This section of the convention card deals with “one over one” overcalls and the responses to these competitive bids.

1 level

Use the spaces provided to describe the strength of your one-level overcalls. Write in the minimum and maximum number of HCP. A commonly used range is 6 to 17 HCP (but others are possible, of course). With less you'd pass, and with more you'd double first and then bid again to show a very strong hand. Note the word 'usually' on the card. Your HCP range is meant to give the opponents a general idea of your overcall philosophy, but the range isn't carved in stone.

Often 4 cards

Most overcalls promise at least five cards in the suit. Rarely, an opportunity for a four-card overcall comes along. For example, RHO opens 1♣ and you hold ♠A K Q J ♥6 ♦8 7 4 3 ♣7 4 3 2. A takeout double is inappropriate because of the singleton heart, but a 1♠ overcall is a standout, even though the suit is only four cards in length. If you make a habit of overcalling four-card suits, however, check the box so that the opponents know about this, too.

SIMPLE OVERCALL

1 level _____ to _____ HCP (usually)
often 4 cards very light style

Responses

New Suit: Forcing NFFConst NF
Jump Raise: Forcing Inv. Weak

Very light style

Many players would venture a 1♥ overcall on a hand such as ♠9 2 ♥K Q J 9 5 ♦8 7 6 5 ♣8 2 despite its minimum high-card strength. Indeed, if your range is 6 to 17 HCP, this would be an example of rock-bottom minimum. If you like to risk even lighter overcalls on a regular basis, check the box marked “very light style.”

Jump raise

What does partner's jump in this auction mean?

RHO	You	LHO	Partner
1♦	1♥	Pass	3♥

Is it forcing? Invitational? Preemptive? Check the appropriate box.

Responses

New Suit

Say the auction begins

RHO	You	LHO	Partner
1♦	1♥	Pass	2♥
Pass	?		

Partner's raise is, of course, not forcing since your overcall could be made on a weak hand. But what if partner bids a new suit instead, say, 2♣? Are you required to bid again? Put another way, is partner's bid forcing? If so, check the “Forcing” box. If it's non-forcing, check that box instead. If partner usually expects you to bid again except in cases where your overcall is a minimum and the hands are misfitting, check the “NFFConst” box (non-forcing, constructive).

ALERT

Note that there is a line in **RED** at the bottom of this box. You may use this line to describe any other treatment that you and your partner agree upon. A good one to discuss is this: what does a jump cuebid mean? For example:

RHO	You	LHO	Partner
1♦	1♥	Pass	3♦

The non-jump cuebid (2♦) is typically played as a general force by most players, but what about the jump cuebid (3♦)? Things such as this can be described on the **RED** line and they must be Alerted.

Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 14



JUMP OVERCALL		
Strong	Intermediate	Weak
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

JUMP OVERCALL When your right-hand opponent opens with a suit-bid at the one level and you make a jump overcall, what kind of hand are you showing? Take a look at these auctions:

RHO	You
1♣	2♦, 2♥ or 2♠
1♦	2♥, 2♠ or 3♣
1♥	2♠, 3♣ or 3♦
1♠	3♣, 3♦ or 3♥

Most pairs treat these jumps as showing a weak hand with a long suit, something resembling a weak two-bid or an opening three-level preempt. If you play this way, check the “weak” box.

If you play that these jumps show strong or intermediate (opening values, but a long suit) hands, check the appropriate box and Alert the opponents.

Items in **RED** on the convention card require an Alert. If the opponents inquire, you must disclose your agreements regarding the meaning of any Alertable call.



ALERT

OPENING PREEMPTS An opening bid on the three or four level typically promises a weak hand (below opening strength) with a long suit. A three-level bid normally suggests a seven-card suit, while a four-level bid suggests an eight-bagger. The texture of the long suit can be the deciding factor for some players on whether the hand qualifies for an opening preempt.

The “**Sound**,” “**Light**” and “**Very Light**” boxes help your opponents gauge your preempting philosophy. How are these different categories defined? There’s a certain subjectivity to these three classes; what’s light for one pair may be very light for another. Here is a guideline for determining which box you should select to best reflect your preempting style:

- If you follow the “rule of 500,” meaning that — if doubled — your suit is good enough that you expect to go down no more than two vulnerable or three not vulnerable, check the “Sound” box. This is the most conservative approach.
- If you preempt on most reasonable (*i.e.*, with some honor concentration) seven- or eight-card suits, select the “Light” box.
- If your style is to preempt even with a bad seven- or eight-card suit, or if you will preempt with fewer cards in the suit than is typically expected, check the “Very Light” box.

OPENING PREEMPTS			
	Sound	Light	Very Light
3/4-bids	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conv./Resp.	_____		

Conv./Resp.

This line is used to describe either conventional uses for preempts or conventional responses to an opening preempt. (Note the **RED** color; Alerts are required.)

If you play, for example, that the opening bids of 4♣ and 4♦ are actually transfers to 4♥ and 4♠ respectively (a treatment called *namyats*), indicate it here.

Another example: If you play that a 4♣ response to a preempt is ace-asking or key-card-asking, describe it on this line.



ALERT

Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 15



Natural

This is undoubtedly the least popular option among experienced players. When an opponent opens with a natural one-level bid, it's rare to hold a hand where you would want to bid two of the same suit as an offer to play in that strain, especially if the suit is a major.

A 1♣ or 1♦ opening may be made with three cards in the suit, so you might occasionally run into the situation where your RHO opens one of a minor and you have an opening hand with five or more cards in that minor with opening values. Using a 2♣ or a 2♦ cuebid of a 1♣ or a 1♦ opening, respectively, to show exactly that type of hand, however, isn't very productive, since (a) it doesn't happen very often and (b) there are other hand types that occur with greater frequency that you'd like to be able to describe.

If you do play that a direct cuebid is natural, however, you must Alert the opponents, since this is an unusual action. Check the appropriate **RED** box.

ALERT

DIRECT CUEBID

Left-hand opponent opens one of a suit, and your partner bids two of the same suit. This is a direct cuebid — but what does it mean? Does the meaning change depending on whether the suit is a minor or a major? This section of the convention card allows your partnership to describe your agreements for these direct cuebids.

There are three commonly used interpretations that you can apply to your direct cuebids: natural, strong takeout or two-suited takeout (Michaels).

DIRECT CUEBID		
OVER:	Minor	Major
Natural	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strong T/O	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Michaels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Michaels

By far, the most popular use for the direct cuebid in duplicate bridge is the two-suited takeout.

Specifically, the convention known as Michaels (after its inventor, the late Mike Michaels) is the treatment of choice. Michaels works like this: a direct cuebid of a minor-suit opening shows a major two-suiter, 5-5 or longer. So the auction 1♣-(2♣) or 1♦-(2♦) shows a hand with five (or more) hearts and five (or more) spades. The strength requirements vary depending on partnership preferences.

After a major-suit opening, a direct cuebid shows five of the other major and a five-card minor. The sequence 1♠-(2♠), therefore, shows five hearts and an undisclosed five-card minor. If the partner of the cuebidder wants to know which minor, he bids 2NT and the Michaels bidder bids his minor suit.

No Alert is required. It's important to discuss continuations with your partner.

Strong T/O (Takeout)

In the early days of contract bridge, a direct cuebid was used to show a very powerful hand, something resembling a strong two-bid. Some players still prefer to use the direct cuebid to show a strong one-, two- or three-suiter. If you play this way, check the appropriate box. No Alert is required.

Note that this treatment is also rarely encountered in club and tournament play.



Note that if the opponents use a system where a one-of-a-minor opening is artificial (such as a Precision 1♣ opening), using a direct 2♣ bid in the natural sense is completely reasonable. So if RHO opens with a strong, artificial 1♣, and your partnership has agreed that a 2♣ call in this case actually shows clubs, no Alert is required.

Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 16



Slam Conventions

This section allows you to briefly describe your conventional slam methods. Note that none of these treatments is Alertable, but you should offer to explain the meanings of these bids before the opening lead is made if your side declares.

vs Interference When the opponents interfere with your ace-asking (or key-card-asking) auctions, there are conventional methods available to combat the interference. Some of the most popular are listed here. Check any that apply.

DOPI An acronym that stands for “Double with none (0), Pass with one (1).” It works like this:

Partner	RHO	You	LHO
1♠	3♥	4NT	5♥
?			

The opponents are being pests. Your 4NT bid (say, regular Blackwood) was asking for aces, but LHO’s 5♥ bid has messed things up. DOPI can help. Partner can double with no aces or pass with one ace. (Partner bids 5♠ with two and 5NT with three.) This gives you the chance to double the opponents instead of being forced to bid a slam with an insufficient number of aces.

Gerber

This convention uses a jump to 4♣ after a natural notrump bid to ask for aces. For example,

You Partner
1NT 4♣

or

You Partner
2NT 4♣

In both cases, partner is asking for the number of aces you hold. The responses: 4♦ shows all or none, 4♥ shows one, 4♠ two and 4NT three.



This is a frequently misused convention. Many pairs treat any bid of 4♣ as Gerber, while others use it after a fit in a suit has been found (e.g., 1♠–3♠; 4♣). Your partnership can, of course, agree to play it in such a fashion, but you must explain your agreements after the auction if your side declares.

4NT: There are many ways to ask for aces and/or relevant high cards in an agreed suit. Check the box that applies.

Blackwood Traditional Blackwood is one of the oldest conventional treatments. A bid of 4NT asks partner to reveal how many aces he or she holds. The responses: 5♣ shows all or none, 5♦ shows one, 5♥ two and 5♠ three.

RKC Roman Key Card Blackwood is a popular 4NT variation which asks not only about the aces, but also about the king of the agreed suit. These five cards are referred to as key cards. The responses: 5♣ shows none or three, 5♦ shows one or four, 5♥ shows two without the queen of the agreed suit, 5♠ shows two with the queen.

1430 A refinement of RKC Blackwood is 1430 Blackwood. 4NT still asks for key cards, but the first two responses are reversed. Therefore, 5♣ shows one or four, 5♦ shows none or three. The last two steps are the same. The name comes from the number of key cards shown in the first two steps (14–30).

SLAM CONVENTIONS Gerber : 4NT: Blackwood RKC 1430

vs Interference: DOPI DEPO Level: _____ ROPI

DEPO Another way to cope with Blackwood interference. Double shows an even number of aces, pass shows an odd number.

ROPI An extension of DOPI. If an opponent doubles your ace-asking bid (usually 4NT), redouble shows no aces, pass shows one, etc.

Level: Some pairs have agreed to use DOPI and DEPO only at the five level. (If the opponents compete to the six level, DOPI and ROPI don’t apply.) Other pairs use DOPI if the opponents’ suit is lower-ranking than yours, but DEPO if it’s higher-ranking. Write your agreement (if any) in the blank provided.

Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 17



DIRECT: A direct 1NT overcall occurs when you bid directly over an opponent's opening one-level bid. For example:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
		1♥	1NT

Write the range of your 1NT overcall in the spaces provided.

SYSTEMS ON: When you overcall 1NT and LHO passes, do you still play Stayman and transfers? If so, check this box to indicate that the methods you play after a 1NT opening apply after an overcall as well.

CONV: If your 1NT overcall is conventional showing either an unbalanced hand, a single suit or a general takeout, write a brief description on the line provided and Alert the opponents.

ALERT All items in **RED** on the convention card must be Alerted and explained upon request.

NOTRUMP OVERCALLS If right-hand opponent opens one of a suit and you overcall 1NT, what does 1NT show? Most pairs define a 1NT overcall as showing the same type of hand as an opening strong 1NT bid, *i.e.*, a balanced hand with 15–17 high-card points. Many players increase the overcall range slightly to 16–18 HCP to provide extra protection since the overcall is somewhat dangerous — the opponents have already opened the bidding and left-hand opponent will know you're outgunned if he or she holds most of the remaining high cards. Another way to think about it is this: you're more likely to be doubled for penalty after a 1NT overcall than after a 1NT opening bid, so having extra values may be wise.

NOTRUMP OVERCALLS

Direct: _____ to _____ Systems on

Conv. _____

Balancing: _____ to _____

Jump to 2NT: Minors 2 Lowest

Conv. _____

BALANCING: A balancing 1NT bid occurs when you bid 1NT in the balancing or pass-out seat. For example:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1♦	Pass	Pass	1NT

The range for this 1NT call is typically less than the range of a direct 1NT bid. Many players define a balancing 1NT bid as showing a balanced hand in the 12–15 HCP range. There are many variations possible, however, and some partnerships even go so far as to have slightly different ranges depending on whether the opening bid is a minor or a major.

Jump to 2NT: Many players have agreed that a 2NT jump overcall of an opponent's opening one-level bid is the so-called "unusual" 2NT showing a two-suited hand. The two suits are frequently the minors. For example:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
		1♥	2NT

After a major-suit opening by an opponent, 2NT promises a hand with a 5–5 or longer pattern in clubs and diamonds. You may even have this agreement if the opponent opens one of a minor.

If your 2NT jump overcall always shows the minors regardless of what suit the opponents open, check the Minors box.

Some pairs, however, prefer to define 1♣–(2NT) or 1♦–(2NT) as showing hearts and the

other minor, while 1♥–(2NT) or 1♠–(2NT) shows the minors. If you play this way, check the 2 Lowest box (since 2NT promises the two lowest unbid suits).

NOTE: A 2NT overcall of a two-level opening is not "unusual" or two-suited.

For example:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
		2♥ (weak)	2NT

Since 2NT is not a jump, in this sequence it merely shows a strong 1NT (15–18 HCP, balanced).

CONV: If your 2NT jump overcall shows something other than the hand types described above, write a brief description on the line provided and Alert the opponents.

NOTE: You should discuss with your partner whether your normal 1NT systems are "on" in this situation. (Do you still play Stayman and transfers, for example?)

Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 18



Defense versus 1NT Openings

There was a time when anyone who opened 1NT could expect to have a nice, quiet, non-competitive auction. Those days are gone, because many players have learned that allowing the opponents to have a nice, quiet, non-competitive auction after a 1NT opening makes matters too easy for the opening side. With a shapely hand and adequate values, therefore, many players are jumping into the bidding not only to describe their own hand, but to throw a monkeywrench into the opponents' methods such as Stayman and transfers. There are many ways to compete after a 1NT opening. It's possible to play that all two-level actions are natural, or you can assign much more complicated meanings to 2♣, 2♦, 2♥, 2♠ and, of course, double. The purpose of this discussion is not to suggest a particular method, but rather outline the proper way to mark your convention card regardless of what your methods may be.

Vs:

The "Defense Vs. Notrump" section of the convention card is arranged in two columns. This is to accommodate pairs who employ different methods depending upon factors such as whether the opponents are using a strong or a weak 1NT opening or to distinguish between direct overcalls and balancing actions.

For example, if the opponents open a 15–17 1NT, you and your partner might agree to play a system in which double shows a hand containing an unspecified long suit. Against a weak notrump opening (anything in the 10–14 HCP range), however, you might have agreed to play double as penalty or as showing values. The two columns allow you to describe your methods in both situations.

Alternatively, some pairs distinguish between a direct overcall, *e.g.*,

RHO	You	LHO	Partner
1NT	2♥		

and a balancing (or pass-out) action, *e.g.*,

RHO	You	LHO	Partner
		1NT	Pass

Pass	2♥		
------	----	--	--

If the meaning for 2♥ is different in these two cases, the two-column format allows you to describe both.

DEFENSE VS NOTRUMP

vs:

2♣ _____

2♦ _____

2♥ _____

2♠ _____

Dbt: _____

Other _____

2♣, 2♦, 2♥, 2♠, Dbt

For each of these calls, write a brief description of what each means. If 2♣ is natural showing clubs, write "clubs" or "natural" in the blank provided. If 2♣ instead shows, say, clubs and hearts, write "clubs and hearts" (or the suit symbols, "♣ + ♥") in the blank. Do this for each of the calls, unless they are all natural in which case you may write "Natural" across the entire section.

Note: If you play a convention such as Cappelletti, DONT, Hello, Brozel or any other of the popular treatments, do not simply write the name of the convention across this section. It's not the job of your opponents to be familiar with your convention. Furthermore, the opponents may want to find out what your methods are by glancing at your convention card rather than by asking you. As a courtesy to the opponents, and in the interests of full disclosure, describe each call on the line provided.

Other

If there are other bids that are part of your conventional defense to 1NT (*e.g.*, What does 2NT mean? What about three-level bids?), describe them here and Alert them when they occur.

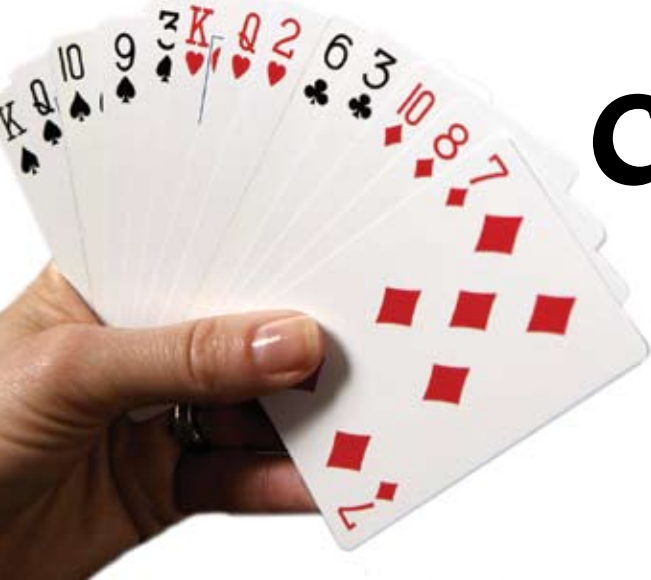
ALERT

If your defense to a 1NT opening by the opponents is anything other than natural, Alert and explain upon request.



Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card – part 19



Over Opponent's Takeout Double: Many pairs agree to change the meanings of certain bids by responder if an opponent makes a takeout double. You should discuss with your partner what effect (if any) an opponent's takeout double has in a typical auction.

New Suit Forcing: When responder makes a "one-over-one" response in an auction where the opponents are silent, *e.g.*,

Partner	RHO	You	LHO
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass

opener is required to bid again. This concept is a cornerstone of contract bridge bidding, and it is so fundamental that the overwhelming majority of players extend this idea even to auctions in which the opponents make a takeout double. Therefore, in the auction

Partner	RHO	You	LHO
1♣	Dbl	1♥	Pass

most play that opener must make a rebid. Another way to put it would be this: over an opponent's takeout double, a one-level response is forcing. If your partnership has this agreement, check the "1 level" box.

A two-over-one response, however, is different. For example, in the sequence

Partner	RHO	You	LHO
1♠	Pass	2♣	

most play that 2♣ shows invitational or better values. Change the auction slightly to this,

Partner	RHO	You	LHO
1♠	Dbl	2♣	

and you may be one of the many pairs who have agreed to define 2♣ as non-forcing — opener may pass. Responder's hand could be something such as ♠9 ♥873 ♦1054 ♣KQJ762. The reason for this difference is right-hand opponent's takeout double, typically promising opening values and support for the other suits. Since the chance of your side reaching game is diminished, many pairs believe that it makes more sense to define some of responder's actions as weaker than they would be in a non-competitive setting.

Jump Shift: Without interference, your partnership may agree to play jump shifts (*e.g.*, 1♣ by partner – 2♥ by you) in any number of ways: very strong, intermediate or weak.

When the opponents intervene with a takeout double, however, many partnerships alter the meanings of their jump shifts. The popular choice is to treat a jump shift after a takeout double as weak. The reason for this is practical: if partner has an opening hand and RHO has an opening hand, it's almost impossible for responder to have a hand that's good enough to qualify for a strong jump shift. It's much more common for responder to have a weak hand with a long suit, making the weak jump shift a more useful option.

Therefore, in an auction such as

Partner	RHO	You	LHO
1♦	Dbl	2♠	

your partnership should decide whether 2♠ is forcing, invitational or weak and check the appropriate box.

OVER OPP'S T/O DOUBLE

New Suit Forcing: 1 level 2 level

Jump Shift: Forcing Inv. Weak

Redouble implies no fit

2NT Over Limit+ Limit Weak
 Majors

Redouble implies no fit: In an auction that begins

Partner	RHO	You	LHO
1X	Dbl	Rdbl	

the redouble typically announces that your side has the balance of power. It usually promises at least 10 high-card points, and it invites partner to penalize the opponents if they run to one his long suits.

There are exceptions worth discussing, however. One of the most important ones is when responder has a fit for opener's suit, especially a major. For example, if partner opens 1♠ and RHO doubles, what do you call, holding

♠QJ32 ♥A7 ♦983 ♣KJ86? You have 11 HCP, but although you have the strength to redouble, it's better to tell partner about the spade fit. (See next month's column for how to handle this type of hand.)

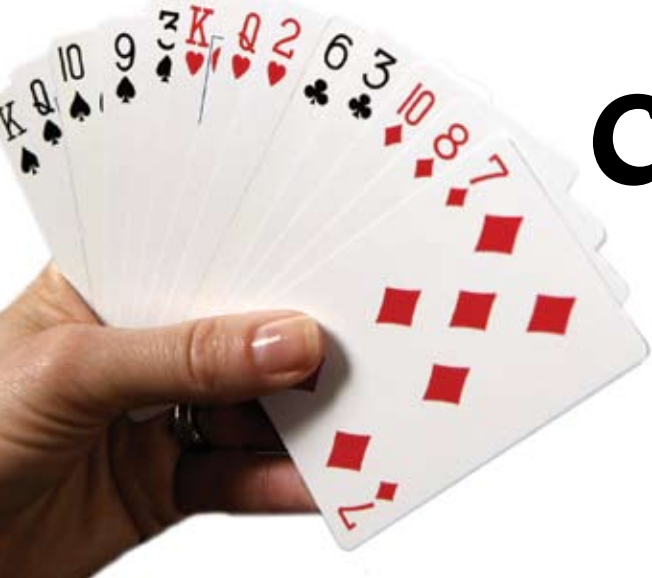
Many pairs also avoid redoubling when responder has a good suit of his own. For example, in the auction

Partner	RHO	You	LHO
1♣	Dbl	?	

if you held ♠8 ♥AKQ86 ♦K543 ♣954 it's better to bid 1♥ than to redouble, since the LHO may preempt in spades. It's better to get your suit in now. That means that many experienced players will reserve redouble for hands which lack a fit for partner's suit and lack a good suit of its own. If redouble implies no fit, check the box.

Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 20



2NT

Could you bid an invitational 2NT instead of redoubling? Sure, but you give up on the chance of nailing the opponents — one of the great joys of the game! Besides, 2NT has better conventional uses since it allows you to describe a difficult class of hands: those in the invitational or better range with a fit for partner's suit.

Say your hand is this:

♠A94 ♥QJ83 ♦109 ♣KJ62.

Partner opens 1♥ and RHO doubles. What do you do? You can't bid 2♥ since that shows 6–9 points and (typically) three-card support. What about 3♥? You could agree to play this as invitational, but many pairs prefer to define the jump raise as preemptive, *i.e.*, a hand with four-card support in the 6–9 range. 4♥ would be wrong too, since that shows a weak hand with five-card or longer support. So what's left? This is where a conventional 2NT comes in handy. Many pairs play that 2NT shows an invitational hand or better with a four-card or longer fit for partner's suit. Partner, knowing that you have a limit raise, can judge what to do next. This treatment is commonly referred to as Jordan or Truscott.

If you play that 2NT in this sequence shows a limit (invitational) or better hand, check the appropriate box. If you play that it shows limit values only, check that box instead.



How do you show an invitational raise of partner's major-suit opening when you have exactly three-card support? A popular approach is to redouble, then jump to three of partner's suit on the next round. This is why the redouble box in this section says that it "implies" no fit.

Over Opponent's Takeout Double

In the last issue, we examined why many pairs play that a redouble after an opponent's takeout double shows 10 or more points and typically denies a fit for opener's suit. For example, when the auction begins

Partner	RHO	You	LHO
1♥	Dbl	Redbl	

you might have a hand such as this:

♠KQ75 ♥9 ♦A862 ♣Q875.

The lack of a fit for partner makes the redouble attractive. Your side (probably) doesn't have a good fit. The opponents have the same problem, but since they're outgunned in terms of high-card strength, you should redouble to alert partner to your intentions, namely to double the opponents, even at a low level.

OVER OPP'S T/O DOUBLE

New Suit Forcing: 1 level 2 level

Jump Shift: Forcing Inv. Weak

Redouble implies no fit

2NT Over Limit+ Limit Weak

Majors

Minors

Other _____

Majors, Minors

While many pairs play that 1♥ or 1♠–(Dbl); 2NT shows a limit (or limit-plus) raise, some pairs change their approach when the opening bid is one of a minor. When the auction begins 1♣ or 1♦–(Dbl); 2NT, some players like to define this as showing a weak (preemptive) raise. How do they show an invitational hand with a fit (five or more cards)? They bid three of partner's suit. Since this approach is the opposite of what they do over a major-suit opening, it is commonly called "flip-flop."

ALERT

Note that all of these treatments are in **RED**, and are Alertable. Explain these agreements upon request.

Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 21

When the opponents preempt, what does double by your side mean? Does it matter how high the opposing preempt is? And what do bids by the partner of the doubler mean? Preempting is much more common in the modern game, so discussing common preemptive auctions with your regular partners is a good idea.

This section of the convention card allows your opponents to see what your methods are for battling preempts.

Takeout thru

The most popular way to play a double of a preempt is takeout, asking partner to bid his best suit. It makes sense to play this way for a simple reason: when the opponents announce that they have a long suit by preempting, it's more likely you'll be short in their suit. Playing double as takeout is practical.

So when the auction begins, for example, 3♥ by right-hand opponent and you hold

♠AK75 ♥6 ♦A543 ♣KJ72,
double would be the textbook action.

How high should you extend this idea? Say RHO preempts 5♣ and you hold

♠A64 ♥J543 ♦AK9 ♣742.

You hope to beat 5♣ with the ♠A and the ♥AK. If you double, though, will partner think it's takeout and bid a suit at the five level?

To prevent this sort of misunderstanding at high levels, most partnerships establish a limit for the takeout double of preempts. A common one is 4♠. If the opponents open 4♠ or higher, double is penalty. If the opening is 4♥ or lower, double is takeout.

Whatever your partnership decides the limit should be, check the "Takeout" box and write the limit in the blank provided after "thru."



Other: If you have any other special agreements, such as ways to show strong two-suited hands over a preempt (e.g., Roman jump overcalls), write it in the space provided and Alert the opponents.

Penalty

If you prefer to play that a double of a preempt is penalty-oriented instead, check the red box and Alert the opponents. This treatment is sufficiently rare in duplicate bridge that it requires an Alert.

ALERT

Conv. Takeout

Pairs who play that double is for penalty will need some way to show a takeout-oriented hand. Some prefer notrump at the cheapest level, while others prefer a particular suit at the cheapest level. If you play this way, write in your conventional takeout bid and Alert the opponents when you use it.

VS Opening Preempts Double is

Takeout thru _____ Penalty

Conv. Takeout: _____

Lebensohl 2NT Response

Other: _____

Lebensohl 2NT Response

Say LHO open 2♠ (weak) and partner makes a takeout double. RHO passes and you hold

♠97 ♥A74 ♦863 ♣KQ864.

You would happily respond 3♣ with this hand. But what if you held

♠97 ♥874 ♦863 ♣Q9864?

Yuck! You still prefer clubs since it's your longest suit, but if you bid 3♣ with this hand too, how will partner know if you have the first hand or the second one?

In an effort to combat weak two-bids, the treatment known as "lebensohl 2NT" was developed. It works like this: when partner makes a takeout double of a weak two-bid and your natural reply would be on the three level, you can show a bad hand (fewer, say, than 8 high-card points) by bidding 2NT first. This is a warning to partner that you have a weak hand, and commands him to bid 3♣. When partner obeys, you may pass (if clubs is your suit) or bid your own suit. The corollary is that when you bid directly to the three level, you're showing a good hand. This method (which must be Alerted) allows the doubler to know if partner has a weak hand.

Experienced
Players

Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 22

Leads

This section of the convention card allows you to outline your opening-lead agreements. Although this is a useful tool for your partnership to improve understanding in the opening-lead department, remember that this section is in fact for the benefit of your opponents so that they will know what your methods are when they declare.

Circle card led, if not in bold In this section, circle the card your partnership has agreed to lead from the list of common holdings, unless that card is already in bold-face type. The cards in bold represent the “standard” lead from a particular holding, but your partnership is free to deviate from the standard treatment as long as you indicate it on the convention card. If, for example, your partnership has agreed to lead the ace from ace-king, circle the letter “A” on the line that reads “A K x.” Note that this section is divided into two parts: one for leads versus suit contracts, the other for leads versus notrump contracts. This allows partnerships who vary their lead agreements in each of these cases — a common occurrence — to show it on the convention card.

This section refers to opening leads only, and not to defensive leads made later in the play.

ALERT

What’s that red “x” on the top line? It’s for partnerships that prefer to lead low from a doubleton. If your partnership has this agreement, circle the **RED** “x” and pre-Alert opponents that you play this method at the beginning of each round. (A pre-Alert is an announcement made to the opponents before the auction begins on the first board of a round. In this case, it would something such as, “We lead low from doubletons on defense.”)

LEADS (circle card led, if not in bold)			
versus Suits		versus Notrump	
x x	x x x x	x x	x x x x
x x x	x x x x	x x x	x x x x
A K x	T 9 x	A K J x	A Q J x
K Q x	K J T x	A J T 9	A T 9 x
Q J x	K T 9 x	K Q J x	K Q T 9
J T 9	Q T 9 x	Q J T x	Q T 9 x
K Q T 9		J T 9 x	T 9 x x
LENGTH LEADS:			
4th Best	vs SUITS <input type="checkbox"/>	vs NT <input type="checkbox"/>	
3rd/5th Best	vs SUITS <input type="checkbox"/>	vs NT <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Attitude vs NT <input type="checkbox"/>		
Primary signal to partner's leads			
Attitude <input type="checkbox"/> Count <input type="checkbox"/> Suit preference <input type="checkbox"/>			

Length Leads Check the appropriate box(es) in this section. If you lead fourth-best, for example, against suit and notrump contracts, check both boxes on the “4th Best” line.

Primary signal to partner's leads When your partner makes the opening lead, dummy is displayed and you (being a good partner) must signal partner as to the best way for him to proceed. This is called your primary signal. There several ways to go about this:

- You can, for example, indicate that you like the opening lead by playing a high card (in standard methods). Or you can play low to show disinterest in partner’s suit. These are “attitude” signals.
- Your partnership may prefer to give “count” on the opening lead, which in standard requires that you begin a high-low signal to show an even number of cards in the suit led. To show an odd number, play low first then high on the next trick.
- You could play that a low card asks the opening leader to switch to a lower-ranking suit, while a high card asks for a switch to a higher-ranking one. This approach is called “suit preference.”

Of course, each deal is different and good defenders will know whether attitude, count or suit preference should apply depending on what the dummy looks like and what the auction has been. You should check the box, however, that fits your general defensive approach.

Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 23



DEFENSIVE CARDING

This section allows your opponents to see at a glance what your defensive carding methods are. It is arranged in two columns: one for suit contracts and one for notrump contracts. This is because you may wish to use one defensive strategy versus suits and a different one versus notrump declarers.

Standard

“Standard” methods look like this:

- Attitude: a high card in a suit signals encouragement, while a low one is discouraging.
- Count: playing a high card followed by a low one in the same suit typically shows an even number of cards in that suit. Low-high shows an odd number. (Note that most standard players reverse this scheme in the trump suit.)
- Suit preference: playing a low card shows a preference for the lower-ranking non-trump suit. Against notrump contracts, a low card shows interest in the lower-ranking suit if declarer/dummy has a known strong suit.

Relevant exceptions should be described in the lines provided after the “Except” box.

Upside-Down

- Attitude: a low card in a suit signals encouragement, while a high one is discouraging.
- Count: playing a low card followed by a high one in the same suit typically shows an even number of cards in that suit. High-low shows an odd number.
- Suit preference: most upside-down practitioners use standard suit preference for simplicity and logic: low cards correspond to lower-ranking suits, high cards to higher-ranking suits.

DEFENSIVE CARDING		vs SUITS	vs NT
Standard:		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Except	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Upside-Down:			
	count	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	attitude	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FIRST DISCARD			
Lavinthal		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Odd/Even		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
OTHER CARDING			
Smith Echo		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trump Suit Pref.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foster Echo		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SPECIAL CARDING		<input type="checkbox"/>	PLEASE ASK

First Discard

You may use your first opportunity to discard to carry a message to partner. Here are two popular approaches:

- Lavinthal: Discard the suit you don't like, but a low discard says you like the lower-ranking of the remaining non-trump suits, while a high discard says you like the higher-ranking one. If spades are trumps, for example, a high heart discard would say you like diamonds.
- Odd/Even: An odd discard (the 3, 5, 7 or 9) says you like the suit you just discarded from, while an even one says you don't.

Special Carding, Please Ask

If you have any other unusual agreements or have special defensive methods that you don't have enough room to describe elsewhere on the card, check this box. (Note that the ACBL convention charts permit only certain types of carding schemes. If you're unsure if your methods are permitted, consult the appropriate chart before play.)

Other Carding

Here are some other common, but advanced, techniques:

- Smith Echo: In this method, either defender shows encouragement for the suit initially led by “echoing” (playing high-low) on declarer's run of a long suit in dummy or in his hand. Failing to echo means you'd prefer a switch to a different suit. This assumes that you do not have to give count in the suit declarer plays on, in which case the Smith echo would not apply.
- Trump Suit Preference: If you play a high trump the first time declarer plays the suit, it shows interest in the higher-ranking non-trump suit. A low trump indicates preference for the lower-ranking suit. If hearts are trumps, for example, and you play the 10 from 10–6–2 when declarer plays the ♥ A, it shows that you like spades.
- Foster Echo: Some defenders agree to play that the partner of the opening leader follows suit with his second-highest card when he can't beat dummy's card or the card that was led.

Experienced
Players



Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 24 (conclusion)

Putting it all together

Some general guidelines about the use of the convention card are presented here, along with an example of a properly filled-out card. (Yours may be different, of course!)

The purpose of the convention card

Although the convention card is a great way for you and your partner to discuss your methods and refresh your memories as to what your agreements are if you haven't played together in awhile, remember that the convention card exists for the convenience of your opponents. The opponents may wish to look at your card at the beginning of a round to get a general idea of what your methods are, they might want to see what your opening lead agreements are when they declare or they may wish to look at your card during the auction to see what your agreements are without asking you to explain them verbally.



Note: Just as you should ask questions during the auction only when it is your turn, you should look at an opponent's card only when it is your turn to bid.

Where should the convention card be placed during play?

Since the card is for the benefit of the opponents, it should remain in a place that they can easily access it, *i.e.*, on the table. When bidding boxes are in use, it can be difficult to find enough room for the boxes, the convention cards, score slips, boards and snacks/drinks. Some players find it helpful to fold their convention cards in half to help conserve space, while others keep non-essential items (food) off of the table. Whatever your approach, avoid practices such as sitting on the card. Make it easy for your opponents to pick up and read your card.

Properly filled out cards

We've all encountered pairs who have either no convention cards or blank cards with the words "Standard" scribbled at the top. This is inappropriate and not in the spirit of the game. If you haven't got time to properly fill out the convention card, you haven't got time to play. It is also required that both partners — not just one — to have properly filled-out cards.



Both players must have identically filled-out convention cards. It is not permitted for one partner to make calls that mean one thing while the same call from his or her partner means something else.

SPECIAL DOUBLES After Overcall: Penalty <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> thru <u>3♣</u> Responsive <input type="checkbox"/> thru <u>3♠</u> Maximal <input type="checkbox"/> Support: Dbl. <input type="checkbox"/> thru <u>2♥</u> Redbl. <input type="checkbox"/> Card-showing <input type="checkbox"/> Min. Offshape T/O <input type="checkbox"/>		NOTRUMP OVERCALLS Direct: <u>15</u> to <u>18</u> Systems on <input type="checkbox"/> Conv. <input type="checkbox"/> Balancing: <u>11</u> to <u>14</u> Jump to 2NT: Minors <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Lowest <input type="checkbox"/> Conv. <input type="checkbox"/>	
SIMPLE OVERCALL 1 level <u>6</u> to <u>18</u> HCP (usually) often 4 cards <input type="checkbox"/> very light style <input type="checkbox"/> Responses New Suit: Forcing <input type="checkbox"/> NF Const. <input type="checkbox"/> NF <input type="checkbox"/> Jump Raise: Forcing <input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>		DEFENSE VS NOTRUMP Vs: <u>strong</u> <u>weak</u> 1 ♠ <u>+</u> other <u>majors</u> 2 ♠ <u>+</u> major <u>natural</u> 2 ♥ <u>majors</u> <u>natural</u> 2 ♠ <u>spades</u> <u>natural</u> Dbl: <u>one suit</u> <u>penalty</u> Other: <u>2NT=minors</u>	
JUMP OVERCALL Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>		OVER OPP'S T/O DOUBLE New Suit Forcing: 1 level <input type="checkbox"/> 2 level <input type="checkbox"/> Jump Shift: Forcing <input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/> Redouble implies no fit <input type="checkbox"/>	
OPENING PREEMPTS Sound <input type="checkbox"/> Light <input type="checkbox"/> Very Light <input type="checkbox"/> 3/4-bids <input type="checkbox"/> Conv./Resp. <input type="checkbox"/>		VS Opening Preempts Double Is Takeout thru <u>4♥</u> Penalty <input type="checkbox"/> Conv. Takeout: <input type="checkbox"/> Lebensohl 2NT Response <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="checkbox"/>	
DIRECT CUEBID OVER: Minor <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input type="checkbox"/> Natural <input type="checkbox"/> Strong T/O <input type="checkbox"/> Michaels <input type="checkbox"/>		SLAM CONVENTIONS Gerber <input type="checkbox"/> : 4NT: Blackwood <input type="checkbox"/> RKC <input type="checkbox"/> 1430 <input type="checkbox"/> vs Interference: DOPI <input type="checkbox"/> DEPO <input type="checkbox"/> Level: <input type="checkbox"/> ROPI <input type="checkbox"/>	
LEADS (circle card led, if not in bold) versus Suits versus Notrump x (A) K x T 9 x A K J x A Q J x K Q x K J T x A J T 9 A T 9 x Q J x K T 9 x K Q J x K Q T 9 J T 9 Q T 9 x Q J T x Q T 9 x K (Q) T 9 J T 9 x T 9 x x		DEFENSIVE CARDING vs SUI TS vs NT Standard: <input type="checkbox"/> Except <input type="checkbox"/> Upside-Down: count <input type="checkbox"/> attitude <input type="checkbox"/> FIRST DISCARD Lavinthal <input type="checkbox"/> Odd/Even <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER CARDING Smith Echo <input type="checkbox"/> Trump Suit Pref. <input type="checkbox"/> Foster Echo <input type="checkbox"/>	
LENGTH LEADS: 4th Best vs SUI TS vs NT <input type="checkbox"/> 3rd/5th Best vs SUI TS vs NT <input type="checkbox"/> Attitude vs NT <input type="checkbox"/>		OTHER CONV. CALLS: New Minor Forcing <input type="checkbox"/> 2-Way NMF <input type="checkbox"/> Weak Jump Shifts: In Comp. <input type="checkbox"/> Hot in Comp. <input type="checkbox"/> 4th Suit Forcing: 1 Rd. <input type="checkbox"/> Game <input type="checkbox"/> Unusual vs. Unusual Truscott vs. Big Club <input type="checkbox"/>	
Primary signal to partner's leads Attitude <input type="checkbox"/> Count <input type="checkbox"/> Suit preference <input type="checkbox"/>		SPECIAL CARDING <input type="checkbox"/> PLEASE ASK	

NAMES Susan Spade & Harold Heart			
GENERAL APPROACH 2/1 Two Over One: Game Forcing <input type="checkbox"/> Game Forcing Except When Suit Rebid <input type="checkbox"/> VERY LIGHT: Openings <input type="checkbox"/> 3rd Hand <input type="checkbox"/> Overcalls <input type="checkbox"/> Preempts <input type="checkbox"/> FORCING OPENING: 1♠ <input type="checkbox"/> 2♣ <input type="checkbox"/> Natural 2 Bids <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>			
NOTRUMP OPENING BIDS 1NT <u>15</u> to <u>17</u> to _____ 5-card Major common <input type="checkbox"/> System on over <u>Dbl</u> 2♠ Stayman <input type="checkbox"/> Puppet <input type="checkbox"/> 2♥ Forcing Stayman <input type="checkbox"/> 2♥ Transfer to <u>♠</u> <input type="checkbox"/> 2♠ → <u>clubs</u> 2NT → <u>diamonds</u> Other: <input type="checkbox"/>		2NT <u>20</u> to <u>21</u> Puppet Stayman <input type="checkbox"/> Transfer Responses: Jacoby <input type="checkbox"/> Texas <input type="checkbox"/> 3♠ <u>slam try</u> in minor 3NT _____ to <u>Gambling</u> Conventional NT Openings <input type="checkbox"/>	
MAJOR OPENING Expected Min. Length 4 5 1st/2nd <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 3rd/4th <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> RESPONSES Double Raise: Force <input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/> After Overcall: Force <input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/> Conv. Raise: 2NT <input type="checkbox"/> 3NT <input type="checkbox"/> Splinter <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="checkbox"/>		MINOR OPENING Expected Min. Length 4 3 <u>0-2</u> Conv. 1♠ <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 1♦ <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> RESPONSES Double Raise: Force <input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/> After Overcall: Force <input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/> Forcing Raise: J/S in other minor <input type="checkbox"/> Single raise <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="checkbox"/> Frequently bypass 4+♦ <input type="checkbox"/> 1NT/1♣ <u>6</u> to <u>10</u> 2NT Forcing <input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> <u>11</u> to <u>12</u> 3NT: <input type="checkbox"/> <u>13</u> to <u>15</u> Other: <input type="checkbox"/>	
DESCRIBE _____ to _____ HCP 2♣ _____ Other <input type="checkbox"/> 2♦ Resp: Neg <input type="checkbox"/> Waiting <input type="checkbox"/>		RESPONSES/REBIDS 2♥ <u>5</u> to <u>10</u> HCP decent suit feature Natural: Weak <input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate <input type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Conv. <input type="checkbox"/> 2NT Force <input type="checkbox"/> New Suit NF <input type="checkbox"/> 2♥ <u>5</u> to <u>10</u> HCP Natural: Weak <input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate <input type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Conv. <input type="checkbox"/> 2NT Force <input type="checkbox"/> New Suit NF <input type="checkbox"/> 2♠ <u>5</u> to <u>10</u> HCP Natural: Weak <input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate <input type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Conv. <input type="checkbox"/> 2NT Force <input type="checkbox"/> New Suit NF <input type="checkbox"/>	

Looking at your own convention card during the auction or play

The Laws forbid access to written memory aids during any phase of the game, and this includes your own convention card. Your convention cards are for the opponents' use, not yours. Note that clubs may relax this rule, however, especially if new players are participating, to assist them in learning. Experienced players may wish to overlook a newcomer's dependence on the card. All players should be aware, however, that the card is not a memory crutch: newcomers may be given a pass, but others should refrain from peeking at the card during the bidding or play.

Active ethics

Be proactive in making sure your opponents understand your explanations. Don't use jargon or convention names when explaining calls. If an opponent looks confused at your explanation, rephrase. Keep your explanations simple, direct and open — the same way that your methods should appear on your convention card.